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ABSTRACT

This bulletin disseminates information concerning educational research and experimentation in Finland. The general principles of educational research are outlined. Attention focuses on achievement of effective cooperation between educational research and decision-making. The organization of research activities promoting educational planning in Finland is outlined and development activities in 1973 are described. Ten institutes of education which are involved in educational research are listed with addresses. A summary of the Finnish Senior Secondary Research Project, a broad longitudinal study on the encounter between a cohort of youth and the actual Finnish educational system and society, is included in the document. (SHM)

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Research and Development Bureau
Finland

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EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Erkki Aho, Director General

The continuous remodelling of the educational plans requires school research, by which is meant:

- basic research in social sciences (pedagogy, psychology, sociology) closely related to the improvement of the school system
- applied research in these fields
- school experimentation and
- further research and analysis associated with the improvement of the school.

This research should be closer associated with the improvement activities directed at the remodelling of the educational plans. However, this presupposes a more explicit planning of the improvement of the public education. At this instance the principles and emphases on which the improvement activities in each case are based, must be clearly stated. Only such planning allows the directing of school research into the areas where the need for new knowledge is greatest.

The weakness of the school research carried out by the National Board of Education has been the imperfect utilization of the research and experiments along with the necessary official communication. To remove this obstacle this bulletin has been started, it will be an essential part of the more extensive renewal of the official communication carried out by the National Board of Education.

Vuokko Isohella. Yrjö Männistö

Educational research in Finland

1. General principles of educational research

Research is an essential part of the development of education. Educational research cannot, however, be focused on the research into the problems of the school only, and the phenomena arising within the school. Society as a whole should be regarded as the general framework for educational research. Until recently, the knowledge acquired by means of research has rather slowly influenced the changes which have been made in the social structure.

In taking up new lines for educational research policy and in its further development, attention should be given to how the most effective cooperation between educational research and decision-making could be achieved.

As regards finding the focuses for the research activities, it is evident that if objectives, contents and methods will be the objects of research, there is no reason to concentrate all research activities in one of these only, but it should be kept in mind that these three objectives compose a unity and are closely interrelated. This conception should form the background whichever of the three alternatives will be chosen as the research object.

As the problems of emphasis are discussed, it may be natural to take the study of cognitive qualifications as the starting point being of central importance. Emphasizing this alternative would be of twofold advantage. It is evident that it would bring forth research connected with the problems of social premises and the conditions of motivation. If some other alternative were emphasized, similar associations would probably not be brought about as naturally. And on the other hand, implementation of this particular emphasis priority would most closely connect the now discussed field with the previously discussed problems of "objectives - contents - methods."

2. Research organization

Research promoting educational planning in Finland has been almost entirely concentrated in a central national institute; i.e. the Institute for Educational Research. The Institute is also responsible for the information on research results. The Institute for Educational Research was established in 1957 to act as an independent unit under the central administration of the University of Jyväskylä. The Institute is the largest of its kind in the Nordic countries, and the number of personnel amounts to almost a hundred.

The Institute for Educational Research concentrates in research benefiting the development of education that has been organized according to the above mentioned outlines for research policy. Educational research is carried out also in the departments of universities and higher education institutions. Part of this research is financed and supervised by the Research and Development Bureau at the National Board of Education.

3. The Research and Development Bureau at the National Board of Education

One of the tasks of the Research and Development Bureau is to develop and supervise the pedagogical experimentation and research concerning primary, comprehensive, secondary or the like schools. Development is primarily financed by means of the annual allowances reserved for pedagogical research and development in the State budget.

The development activities in 1973 have been focused on the following points:

1. Common and general fields (a system of describing the objectives, differentiation, integration, development of teaching material, evaluation, development of the activities in the school as a communal institution.
2. Pre-school (further development of the curricula).
3. The comprehensive school (development of the curricula, preliminary instruction, complementary teaching, development of

activities in the united grades, activities in the upper section of the comprehensive school, development of individual study subjects).

4. Special education

5. Senior Secondary School (Gymnasium)

The Research and Development Bureau is continuously surveying the field of school research. The Bureau proposes new research fields to the institutions on the basis of the above presented arguments. The researchers take a standpoint to the proposals and prepare specified research plans. The Research and Development Bureau does not carry out independent research activities it plans and coordinates the research activities financed by the National Board of Education.

Special attention is given to the practical application of the results of educational research, to popularization of knowledge acquired by means of research, and to information on research results. Therefore the Research and Development Bureau has produced a system of utilization, the central part of which is the so-called production group. The production group searches for the groups of research objects, informs them on the research in guestion and, if necessary, directs the research activities. It also organizes seminars for researchers who are occupied with the same problems. After the research plan has been carried through, the production group draws up recommendations on practical measures for implementation and organizes a following system.

4. Information on research projects

Information on the current research projects and on the projects that have been carried through is delivered in the series Tiedonantoja koulututkimuksesta, published by the Research and Development Bureau at the National Board of Education. It is also issued in English under the title Information Bulletin. Research reports and abstracts are published in a series of research reports by the Research and Development Bureau.

Research reports are published also by the Department of Information and Documentation at the Institute for Educational Research. In 1973, the number of these publications will amount to almost 70. Information will also be improved at the international level. The Institute for Educational Research intends to launch out a new series of publications presenting abstracts of the research reports in English. The Institute for Educational Research is publishing the 110th annual volume of the periodical Kasvatus (Education). The departments at univeristies and at institutions of higher education publish their own report series.

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   00100 Helsinki 10, Finland

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   Tulliportinkatu 1 a
   80100 Joensuu 10

3. Institute of Special Education, University of Jyväskylä
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   40100 Jyväskylä 10

4. Institute of Education, University of Jyväskylä
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   40100 Jyväskylä 10

5. Institute for Educational Reseach, University of Jyväskylä
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   40100 Jyväskylä 10

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After Junior Secondary in the Finland of 1960's. The Finnish Senior Secondary Research Project 1964-71: the educational careers.

S u m m a r y

1. Background and purpose of the study.

The Finnish Senior Secondary Research Project 1964-71 is a broad longitudinal study on the encounter between a cohort of youth and the actual Finnish educational system and society.

The research project originated from an inter-Scandinavian initiative, a recommendation by the inter-governmental Cultural Commission that parallel longitudinal studies should be started in several countries in order to throw light on the selection of pupils to the senior secondary (Gymnasium) level of the school systems. As a consequence, similar projects were started during the mid-sixties in Sweden (Pedagogisk-psykologiska institutionen, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, later continued at the University of Umeå: Henrysson and Ljung, in Norway (University of Oslo: Sandven, and in Denmark (Social-forskningsinstituttet: Hansen.

All these four Scandinavian projects developed independently according to the actual problems and needs of their respective countries, even if there have been close contacts and even some joint publications were produced. They were also administered and financed separately. To the Finnish project direct financing came through a committee appointed by the Ministry of Education. The investigator herself worked for the most part of the period as a research assistant of the state Research Council for Social Sciences and the actual work was performed at the Institute of Education, University of Helsinki.

The originally limited purpose of the study was during the flow of years enlarged to an attempt of getting a general picture of the careers and the personal experiences of a group of Junior Secondary leavers in the immediately following period of their lives. In this way information was gathered about the real impact of the school system and of the society on individuals in their late teens. Special interest has been given to the careers of youth with differing social background and sex.

Several articles and shorter studies have been published on the project. The report marks the end of the work of the financing committee. It focuses on the description of the longitudinally observed educational careers of different individuals, on the relationships between these careers and such characteristics that were observable at the beginning of the study in the Junior Secondary leavers, and finally, on the relations between different educational careers and teh observed placement in work, education and family at the end of the study period.

For technical reasons the report is divided into five successive numbers (123-127/1972) of the publication series. The ten chapters of the report are found in the following volumes:

I.	Introduction: the origin and development of the project	- vol.123/1972
II.	The background and character of the study the location in time and place	- vol.123/1972
III.	The main features of the educational careers during six years	- vol.123/1972
IV.	What kind of youth were the Junior Secondary leavers?	- vol.124/1972
V.	What were the school experiences and the thoughts on Senior Secondary of the Junior Secondary leavers?	- vol.124/1972
VI.	Which Junior Secondary leavers transferred immediately to Senior Secondary?	- vol.125/1972
VII.	The educational careers in the Senior Secondary	- vol.126/1972
VIII.	Who transferred to vocational schools?	- vol.126/1972
IX.	Where were the Junior Secondary leavers six years later?	- vol.127/1972
X.	Discussion on the educational careers	- vol.127/1972

In the report results are presented mainly as simple cross-tabulations, which permit further analysis and interpretation and offer a basis for practical considerations in school planning and reform.

2. Subjects and methods of the study.

The Finnish Senior Secondary Research Project 1964-71 was carried out at a time when the last large age groups of the post-war period were confronted with a still unchanged traditional system of secondary school. The Junior Secondary consisting of

five grades, was entered at the average age of eleven after four years in the obligatory primary school, the transfer to the Senior Secondary was practically open for those who had finished the Junior Secondary with approved marks. The Senior Secondary consisted of three grades, was only slightly differentiated and ended with a centrally administered matriculation examination which gave eligibility for university studies.

The sample comprised 1 435 Junior Secondary leavers who came from 13 secondary schools in nine different localities, town and country communities in southern, northern and eastern Finland. Most descriptive characteristics of the group coincide well with the corresponding averages for the total country and its schools.

As the research project started in the school year 1964-65, the 15-17 year old Junior Secondary leavers belonged mainly to the age groups born in 1949 and 1948. In spite of the fact that the secondary school had not been able to receive all formally qualified applicants, the Junior Secondary leavers represented 40 % of their age groups.

During their final grade at the Junior Secondary in 1964/65 the 1 435 original subjects were given several questionnaires dealing with their school experiences, future plans and background data. In addition, data on present and previous school achievements, ability test results as well as free essays on motives and espectations were collected.

In the Finnish Senior Secondary Research Project a great effort was made to collect continuous information from all the original subjects through all the seven school years from 1964/65 to 1970/71 regardless of where a person transferred within the educational system or at which time he left this system. For the most part the observations cover over 90 % of the total sample and even the last questionnaire mailed in 1970/71 was answered by about 80 % of them. In addition, material has been collected from about 800 other Finnish senior secondary school pupils who for some time studied simultaneously in the same schools.

3. Development of educational careers, entrance upon adult roles.

The original cohort of Junior Secondary leavers is very differentiated in regard of their subsequent educational careers. 58 % of the subjects (corresponds roughly to 23 % of the total age group) transferred to the Senior Secondary, only 52 % of them, however, immediately and 6 after spending an additional year in the last grade. On the other hand, 11 % of the Junior Secondary leavers or 18 % of these having enrolled in the Senior Secondary interrupted their studies.

Those who stayed on in the Senior Secondary, used different amounts of time to their studies, although the Senior Secondary should normally be finished in three school years. This normal speed was used only by 25 % of the original cohort or by 44 % of those who had enrolled in the Senior Secondary. 29 % of Senior Secondary students had delayed their studies by one additional year, 7 % by two years and 2 % had a delay of three years or more. In five school years after the Junior Secondary, then, 46 % of the original group or 80 % of those who had entered Senior Secondary thus had taken the final matriculation examination and qualified formally for university studies. This corresponds roughly to 18 % of the total age groups.

Both the delays and dropouts in the Senior Secondary should partly be regarded as consequences of the rather open entrance from Junior to Senior Secondary. On the other hand, both phenomena seem to have also deliberate and non-cognitive sides.

In the seventh school year after the start of the research project, 1970/71, a questionnaire was mailed to all the original subjects asking about their present situation. Of the total original cohort of Junior Secondary leavers, now 21-23 years old, 41 % were employed, only 30 %, however, in a way they considered as more or less permanent. 44 % were full-time students in the educational system and 15 % either abroad, in compulsory military service or at home. 22 % of the cohort was married and an additional 23 % considered marriage probable in the near future.

Between those who had taken the matriculation examination and those who did not continue in or dropped out of the Senior

Secondary there was a remarkable difference in the speed of assuming such adult roles as permanent employment or marriage. When only 19 % of the former were employed and only 7 % of them considered permanent, 65 % of the latter were employed and 55 % in a permanent way. 66 % of those with a matriculation examination were still within the educational system (only 45 %, however, at university studies, to which entrance in highly restricted), but only 22 % of those without a matriculation examination. On the other hand 56 of the latter group but only 12 % of the former had already finished some kind of vocational education. Only 10 % of the group with a matriculation examination were married and 65 % had definite plans of delaying it, while 35 % of those who did not continue in or dropped out of the Senior Secondary were married and only 40 % definitely wanted to delay it. Different educational careers were thus connected with different time perspectives and different relations to some important aspects of the adult role.

4. Relations between the characteristics of the Junior Secondary leavers and their recruitment to different educational careers.

The different educational careers obviously were partly formed by everts occurring in the years after the Junior Secondary. These are not discussed in this report, which concentrates on the relations between characteristics observed already in the Junior Secondary and the subsequent recruitment to different educational careers.

As the original subjects at the beginning of the last grade in the Junior Secondary were interviewed about their plans and motives, a great part of them were still undecided. A majority of them entered later the Senior Secondary, on the other hand a majority of those who did not continue or dropped out of the Senior Secondary school were much more definite in their aims.

The reasons given for entering the Senior Secondary only seldom expressed a definite interest in theoretical studies as such. The most common motives were instrumental about getting along

better in life and getting an opportunity to delay vocational choices. On the other hand the most common motives for not entering or completing the Senior Secondary had more direct connections with the characteristics of the school and educational system as such: I would not succeed in my studies - I do not like school and studies - long studies even after Senior Secondary would be necessary.

The recruitment of different persons to different educational careers was investigated according to their age, sex, ability test performance, previous school career and achievement, personal school experiences, motivational background to own educational decisions, home background, peer interaction and general attitudes and goals.

The performance on ability tests had remarkably little association with the transfer or non-tranfer to the Senior-Secondary. The relation was somewhat stronger to the interruptions or delays of the studies, but still rather weak. The associations of the educational career with the previous Junior Secondary career and achievement were much clearer, but not decisive.

The Finnish Senior Secondary school has got international attention by having more girls than boys passing the matriculation. This majority has, however, been created already at the earlier levels so that among the Junior Secondary leavers slightly more of the boys than of the girls transferred to the Senior Secondary. As, however, the interruptions and delays were somewhat more frequent for the boys than for the girls, the resulting educational careers in the end were rather similar for the both sexes. The motives, plans and attitudes of the boys and girls, however, differend more, and thus the differences in subsequent life careers were already anticipated. Although slightly younger in age, the girls entered adult roles in both employment and marriage much earlier than the boys.

As for home background, the social factors had a clear, although not decisive, relation especially to the entrance upon Senior Secondary. 89 % of those coming from the highest social background made this choice, for the lowest groups the figures were correspondingly 41 % (unskilled workers) and 35 % (small farmers). The study delays and interruptions were, however, most

frequent in the social middle groups and in town environments. Among those who did not enter or complete the Senior Secondary again, vocational studies were especially taken up by the children of farmers and workers and by youth coming from a country environment.

Clearly, however, the characteristics most closely connected with the recruitment to different educational careers seemed to be located in the motivational and attitudinal field, although intertwined with previous school career, age, and social background. Here especially the relation to the time perspective, willingness to accept delays in entering upon adult roles and tolerance and acceptance of the role of a pupil in school had the gratest weight. This opens certain important questions for the school as an institution.